

PRINCIPAL'S ADVISORY COUNCIL (PrAC) MINUTES

September 7, 2005

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

State Board Room

Attending:

Deneen Zimmerman, Leon Davidson, Bill Boblett, Jon Stratton, Gil Lawson, William Whitaker, Ezra Farris, Terry Price, Susan French, Mike Hogg, Kay Kennedy, Janice Ernst, Mark Raleigh, Mark Sellers, Jan McDowell, Gene Wilhoit

Sharing Local Activities

Discussion was held on the number of children entering schools in Kentucky because of Hurricane Katrina. Kentucky anticipated 500 children initially and it's up to 1,500; it is estimated that it may go even higher. It has been heart-warming to hear the stories coming out of what schools are doing to welcome the kids. Many families will probably not return home and will become permanent members of Kentucky communities. Information was sent to all superintendents regarding getting the kids started in school. Health Departments will be also be going into the schools for health screenings. It is very likely that schools will not get any records on these kids. Goal is to get the kids into class - learning, meeting new friends, etc.

High School Graduation Requirements – Michael Miller, Director, Division of Curriculum Development

Information about proposed changes to Kentucky's minimum high school graduation requirements were discussed with the council. The KBE is scheduled to discuss the proposed changes at the October Board meeting.

Michael Miller shared the proposed changes with council members, who had varying reactions to the new requirements, as listed in the following section.

Key points of the PrAC reaction to the proposed changes:

- Requiring 4 credits in mathematics and math every year were generally supported by several on the council. Two principals, in particular, shared that they had once required 4, but now require 3.
- Requiring Algebra II of all students was seen as problematic to several members. They suggest an opt-out "default" curriculum for some students unable to face the difficulty of Algebra II.
- Concern about how the required 4 credits in mathematics would impact the electives available, and important, for career and technical education electives. Need strong mathematics connections to career and technical courses, such as expansion of offerings in career and technical that would also cover the mathematics content required.

- Need to change the Arts requirements in CATS to align with the new “specialization” option. Students who choose to “specialize” may not be exposed to the full arts content tested under the current arts assessment in CATS.
- Need to consider foreign language acquisition. If not two required credits, consider second-language competency, especially Spanish, given the growing Spanish speaking population.
- Concern that increasing the rigor of the requirements may have negative impact on Special Education students. Concern that the curriculum may be “watered down” in order for some in this population to acquire the credits needed.

Proposed Changes in the KEES Scholarship Program/Refocusing High Schools: Aligning Funding Policy – Linda Pittenger, Director, Division of Secondary & Virtual Learning

The Principals were generally supportive of the proposed changes to KEES and concur that the changes need to be considered in light of the proposed changes to minimum high school graduation requirements. While the group finds merit in several of the proposed expansions to the scholarship program, such as additional funds for Jeff Green Scholars, the group would place these ideas on a lower priority unless the total amount of funds available for KEES is increased. The majority agrees that a minimum threshold of 15 on the ACT is too low and should be raised to clarify expectations about what it takes to be ready for college and work. Several members did express concerns that raising the threshold to 18 would penalize high poverty and minority students.

The proposals to establish alternate bases for funding calculations received support and there was little discussion. Principals indicated that increased flexibility would be needed to expand learning options and provide each student with rigorous, relevant studies.

702 KAR 6:090, Minimum Nutritional Standards for Foods and Beverages Available on Public School Campuses During the School Day (Regulation Attached) – Paul McElwain, Director, Division of Nutrition and Health Services

Described the requirements of the bill regarding both nutrition and physical activity. Provided detail as to the contents of the administrative regulation adopted by the Kentucky Board of Education and the timeline for further action on the regulation before it becomes final.

Discussed the physical activity and nutrition environments assessments and reporting requirements. Discussed the physical activity requirements specifically mandated for elementary schools and what the language means.

Would like for KDE to provide more definitive guidance regarding the physical activity requirements for elementary schools.

NOTE: The Clearinghouse has approved six regional meetings to focus on providing additional, more definitive guidance regarding all of the requirements of SB 172. The dates and locations are set and invitations are forthcoming.

Principal Internship and Certification – Robert Brown, Educational Professional Standards Board

The presentation provided drafts of one and two-year model proposals for changes to the principal internship program. Discussions were held with the PrAC on the pros/cons of each of the plans. The discussion will be used as one of many constituent viewpoints and suggestions for improvements to the current Kentucky Principal Internship Program (KPIP).

E-walks – John Fields, Branch Manager, Professional Growth Branch

How will the new improvements to the Gates Walkthrough help principals improve teaching and learning?

- Ability to customize
- Data collection can be done on a more specific level
 - Use of technology
 - How well an instructional assistant is being use
 - Focus on the critical features of your reading program
- Help re-emphasizing the mission and vision

How can the tool help principals with closing the achievement gap?

- Create a big picture of one's school or program
- It gets principals in the classrooms
- It makes us aware of the things that matter

The presentation was geared towards providing an update on the project.

Closing the Achievement Gap – Toyah Robey, Office of Special Instruction Services

The presentation discussed the need to step up the sense of urgency for closing the achievement gap for Kentucky children as well as the use of stronger measures for those schools persistently not improving achievement for all students. It was shared that an intentional focus must be on access for all students to rigorous curriculum, quality leadership and improved school culture/climate, and effective instruction with an emphasis on differentiated instruction.

Discussion centered on process and strategies for closing the gap. Concerns were shared that there is a need for a type of resource that highlighted specific strategies/activities and a process for improving school culture and climate. It was also discussed about how to differentiate instruction, as well as a resource list of possible trainers in these areas.

**NEXT MEETING:
December 5, 2005**